Claire Waxman – Founder of Voice 4 Victims

*“As a stalking victim, I experienced first-hand a torrent of abuse and re-victimisation at the hands of our Criminal Justice System. I naively believed the system was there to help victims, instead it compounds their trauma. It placed the rights of my stalker above my rights to be protected”.*

*Claire Waxman*

Victims’ Rights Campaigner

* Targeted by a fixated stalker for 12 years
* Won a landmark case against CPS decision not to prosecute her stalker
* A key contributor to the successful campaign for change in stalking laws
* Architect of the Victims Right Bill Campaign

*“Victims were being exposed to more abuse once they entered the Criminal Justice system and that the system had been built on an inequality of rights” explains Claire*

The Voice 4 Victims campaign seeks to address the imbalance of equality though enshrining rights of victims in a Victims’ Law. In her own experience, as a victim of a sustained campaign of stalking, Claire discovered that the criminal justice system made it not only difficult to access justice but compromised her safety too. She was left dealing with the impact of the stalking and also battling the criminal justice system.

In 2010, astounded by the perpetual failings in her own stalking case and the clear gaps in legislation, she started an e-petition via Now Magazine and Facebook. Claire asked the public to support a stalking legislation and for mandatory training. The public responded in the thousands signing the petition and victims came forward to share their stories which clearly demonstrated the scale of the problem.

It was in 2011, after yet another CPS failing, Claire challenged the CPS decision not to prosecute her stalker, a decision taken on the basis that this prosecution would breach his human right. In February 2012, her application at The Royal Courts of Justice was upheld and she won her case against the CPS. It was a landmark victory which showed the value of the Human Rights Act in protecting Victims of crime. It was this victory that gave Claire the impetus to start campaigning for the legislation of Victims’ Rights.

The Voice4Victims campaign started in earnest January 2013, after the highly successful stalking law reform enquiry which led to the new stalking legislation in November 2012. Claire has been able raise awareness and create a debate around Victims’ Rights. She has spoken openly and often about her experience to raise public awareness and support in parliament.

Working with several victims’ organisations and charities, the campaign has amassed substantial evidence about the difficulties and injustices victims face within the criminal justice system. Including addressing the legal loopholes within the Civil and Family courts which allow perpetrators direct contact to abuse or harass their victims further.

Together with the expertise of Harry Fletcher, Criminal Justice Director of the Digital Trust and colleague Kate Whaley, MAMAA a Victim’s Rights Bill was drafted and has now gained cross party support. Claire is optimistic that it will become law and ensure that there is a culture shift towards the treatment of victims in this country.